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Octavitas: A Puerto Rican Celebration

By [Jessica Ramirez](#) January 18, 2013 [Leave a Comment](#)



Octavitas photo provided by Dr. Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard

The rhythmic and infectious sounds coming from the barrel-shaped drums called barriles. The melodious chants from the chorus line. The colorful dresses swaying to and fro in the air. The smiling faces on the lovely dancers. If that is not enough to get you out to the [Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance and Cultural Center](#) to celebrate Puerto Rican style, on **Sunday, Jan. 20 from 2 to 5 p.m.** then you will be missing out!

[Octavitas](#) is one of the final celebrations during the Puerto Rican holiday season. During this time, Puerto Rican tradition involves parrandas or asaltos, in which neighbors go door to door in the middle of the night to wake everyone with singing, dancing and the celebration continues as more and more neighbors get added to the mix.

The holiday season officially ends at the beginning of February in Puerto Rico, so the Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance and Cultural Center—founded by Dr. Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard—has put together this celebration to bring together the Puerto Rican community along with

those interested in the richness of the culture.

“What we do with the Octavitas celebration each year is provide a chance for people to come to our cultural center and experience the joy of the holiday season along with our traditions,” says Maynard, “It’s our chance to showcase our talent to the community and it also brings awareness to the way they can immerse themselves in our culture, even if they aren’t Puerto Rican.”

This year will be the first year the Tres Reyes Magos will be making an appearance at PRFDCC’s Octavitas celebration and they will bring gifts for each child.

Andrea Mellette—a senior leading dancer at PRFDCC—says, “I mostly look forward to the excitement of the children because they always have lots of fun and they are not shy so they dance and sing and play and have lots of fun.” And with the Reyes Magos bearing gifts there sure will be plenty of excitement.

Along with the honorable presence of the Reyes Magos PRFDCC will also be honoring Reyna Martinez—President of Sociedad Cultural Hispanoamericana in Killeen, Texas—and Migdalia Aponte—President of Association of Puerto Ricans in San Antonio, Texas—for dedicating their time and effort to the Puerto Rican community in central Texas.

The Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance and Cultural Center was founded by Maynard because after establishing her career and having her first child she realized how much she missed her cultural heritage and how important it was for her children to be familiar with their roots. 15 years later and the organization is still going strong thanks to a growing Puerto Rican community and to the city of Austin’s appreciation for the arts.

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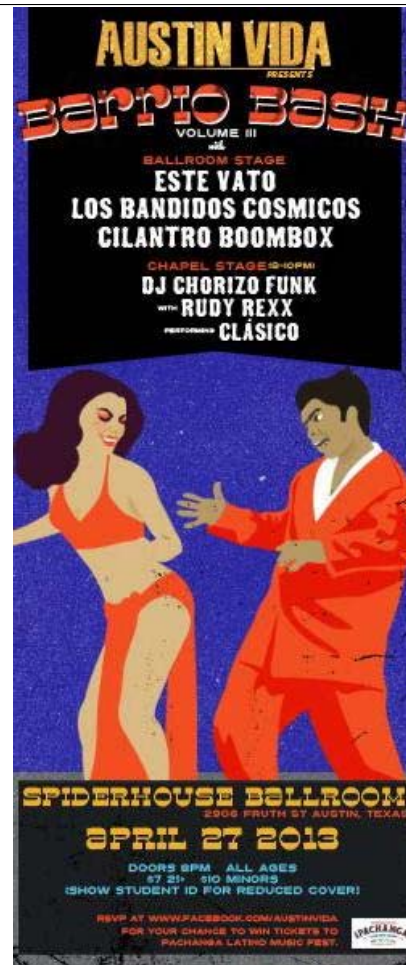
"I moved here from New York and when I got here I immediately missed my Puerto Rican community and luckily I was able to find one here," says Yolanda Maisonet a dance and costume manager for PRFDCC.

Madrile Wilson—a musician for the dance company—says, "I love being a part of this group because I love percussion, I love celebrating and I love the family I've formed here. It all helps me get in touch with my roots."

PRFDCC is currently recruiting people who are interested in joining their family. If you're interested in dancing, singing, meeting friendly people or if you seek enrichment and want to learn more about the Puerto Rican culture then you should definitely consider joining the PRFDCC community.

The Octavitas celebration will take place this **Sunday, Jan. 20 from 2 to 5 p.m.** at the Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance and Cultural Center located at 701 Tillery St. This celebration should be fun for people of all ages so don't miss it.

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TRANSLATION

Irregular



Jessica Ramirez

Jessica was born and raised in San Antonio. She is a senior studying multimedia journalism and is currently the president of the University of Texas Hispanic Journalists. She also volunteers at Texas Student Television and KVRX 91.7 FM. She is obsessed with pop culture and enjoys writing about entertainment and lifestyle.

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